



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 130th ENGINEER BRIGADE
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REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AETV-EB-CDR

13 June 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Brigade Policy Letter # 9 – Reenlistment is the Leader's Job

1. The Army Retention Program is a Commander's program; however, the retention and transition aspects of the program require leader interest and involvement at all levels.
2. To be a truly effective Army, we have to retain high quality soldiers to sustain our future NCO Corps. This requires the enthusiastic involvement of all leaders (noncommissioned officers and officers). Your total involvement is essential to strengthen the program at all levels. The success of our Retention Program depends on your effective leadership.
3. Our soldiers and NCOs need to know there is a future for those who decide to make the Army a career. To be successful they have to commit to the tradition of excellence and dedicate themselves to doing everything to the absolute best of their ability. If they do this, they can rest assure they will have a solid future in the Army and will be promoted with or ahead of their peers. The readiness of the Army is the enlisted force.
4. SAPPERS IN!

Encl

GREGG F. MARTIN
COL, EN
Commanding

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Retention through involvement and communication

- Retention begins on the first day of enlistment and continues through the enlistment.
- If problems are allowed to go uncorrected until reenlistment time, that's too late for them to be solved.
- The first impression a soldier forms of his/her unit and of the Army have a lasting effect on the individual's term of service, and in fact may determine whether there will be another term.
- Start off right
- Your efforts should begin with an orientation to make new people feel welcome, and let them know they are needed and wanted.
- Sponsorship Program, to help the newcomer get settled into work responsibilities and meet other people, and generally assisting in any way possible. This relieves uneasiness and can speed them on their way to becoming productive and well adjusted.
- Keep Training on Track
- Another aspect that influences retention is training people under your supervision.
- Constant monitoring and evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of training are essential to unit readiness.
- A well-trained soldier who is challenged in doing an interesting and important job, and who is using and refining job skills, has good reason to stay in the Army.
- When you do your part to see that time is spent in well-organized, meaningful and productive training, everyone benefits.
- Communication and Counseling
- Whenever possible, improve communication.
- What's involved is what you are already doing: finding out about the soldiers you supervise; learning what kind of people they are, what they're interested in and why they joined; seeing how well they are progressing toward their objectives, whether their goals have changed in their personal, family or career situations.
- Keep your people informed.
- Provide the most up-to-date information about:

-Unit activities – responsibilities and assignments
Opportunities
Benefits

-This means letting each person know just what is expected.

-It is important that communication be two-way, that the soldiers know what supervisors are saying and thinking and vice versa, then it benefits everyone. You gain important feedback by asking opinions from our soldiers and by listening to what they have to say with an open mind.

-Clear instructions and guidance help soldiers do their jobs more effectively. Your expressions of confidence, trust and approval provide necessary motivation and encouragement that are important in creating a positive environment. Establishing a rapport between supervisor and soldier must include mutual respect, understanding and working together to achieve the common goals of maximum unit/section effectiveness, which translates into a place where people like to be due to job satisfaction and environment.

-Remember, you are the supervisor in closest contact with your people.

-You – supervise their training
evaluate their performance
know their objective and abilities
must get to know the person

-Because of this, you are the one most likely to be aware of any individual concerns or problems affecting retention, any changes in attitude or effort. You are in the best position to do something about problems as they arise.

-Your people come to you with their problems and questions, and look to you for leadership and advice. These informal talks that you have with your people, both on and off the job, are probably as effective as any formal retention-counseling program.

-Your example is a powerful influence.

-The pride your people feel is important, so be sure to recognize their achievements, whether major accomplishments or just day-to-day job well done. As you instill individual and unit pride in your soldiers, that goes a long way toward developing the kind of teamwork that leads to success, in mission accomplishment and retention.

-Finally, as a first-line supervisor, your leadership and management abilities are evaluated, in part, upon your ability to develop and maintain an efficient, smooth-running squad, platoon or section. So retention of skilled, experienced people should be your highest priority.